

III. REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-6, 8-20, and 22-34 have been amended and claims 7 and 21 have been cancelled. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant does not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections or objections and reserves the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected or objected-to claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicant reserves the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Specifically, the Office alleges that it is unclear what is meant by the term “else” in claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to remove the term “else.” In addition, Applicant has followed the Office’s suggestion of removing the terms “super,” “parent,” and “current” in claims 1 and 2. In their place is substituted a clearer description of the difference between the roles such terms described, with respect to their places in a hierarchical matrix-based workflow.

The Office further alleges, with respect to claim 1, that the limitation “best matching resource” is indefinite without a recitation of how the best matching resource is determined to be the “best” resource. However, Applicant asserts that in view of the removal of the terms “super,” “parent,” and “current,” described above, as well as the further amendments to claim 1 shown above, the basis for this rejection is obviated.

For example, as amended, claim 1 now makes clear that “in the case that no hierarchically-superior roles of role F exist, returning x as the best matching resource.” That is, if it is determined that no resource in the workflow other than resource x is capable of performing role F, then the “best” matching resource is, necessarily, resource x. Similarly, as amended, claim 1 makes clear that, in the case that such hierarchically-superior roles do exist, following a selection process described in amended claim 1, the “best” matching resource will be taken from a group of “immediately hierarchically-superior” resources, should such a resource exist. Finally, in the case that the selection process finds no hierarchically-superior role to be the “best” matching resource, the process is iterated using all servicing organizational units.

It should be recognized that the above description of amended claim 1 is provided merely for the purpose of explanation and is not to be construed as limiting the scope of the claim or any of its terms. In view of the foregoing, Applicant asserts that the basis for the rejection is obviated and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 20-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,308,163 to Du et al. (“the ‘163 patent”). Applicant maintains the arguments that the use of the term “role” in the ‘163 patent is distinct from its use in the present application and that the ‘163 patent does not teach a matrix organizational model.

In addition, Applicant asserts that, as suggested by the Office and described above, the removal of the terms “super,” “parent,” and “current” from the claims and their replacement with clearer descriptions of the differences between the roles such

terms described, distinguishes the present invention from the teachings of the '163 patent.

With respect to claims 20-24, Applicant asserts that, based the above amendment to claim 20 and the argument made below with respect to the rejection of claims 6-19 and 25-34, claims 20 and 22-24 (claim 21 is cancelled) are allowable in view of the cited art and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

In the Office Action, claims 6-19 and 25-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the '163 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,826,239 to Du et al. ("the '239 patent").

With respect to claims 7 and 8, the Office states that "[c]laims 7-8 recite[] limitations already addressed by the rejection of claims 1-6 above, therefore the same rejection applies." Office Action at 14. However, Applicant respectfully asserts that neither the rejection of claims 1-5 discussed above nor the offered rejection of claim 6 deal with the limitations of claim 7. For example, these rejections make no mention of, and point to no portion of the '163 patent or the '239 patent that describe, "identifying all inherited links associated with [an] organizational model."

Claim 7 has been cancelled and its substance incorporated into amended claim 6. In addition, similar to the amendments made to claim 1, described above, the phrase "inherited links" has been deleted and replaced with the phrase "links of hierarchically-superior roles" to better describe the relative position of the links in the hierarchical matrix organizational model.

For each of the reasons above, Applicant asserts that neither claim 6 nor any of its dependent claims is obvious in view of the '163 patent or the '239 patent, whether

considered alone or in combination, and therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

As noted above, a similar amendment has been made to claim 20, incorporating the substance of cancelled claim 21. In addition, claim 31 has been amended, *inter alia*, to delete the phrase "inherited links" and substitute the phrase "links of hierarchically-superior roles," as above with respect to amended claims 1 and 6. As such, Applicant asserts that claims 25-30 and 32-34 are allowable as depending from now-allowable claims 20 and 31, respectively, and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicant asserts that each of the rejected dependent claims is allowable for the reasons given above, as well as for their own unique features.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and objections and allowance of the application. Should the Examiner require anything further from Applicant, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen F. Swinton, Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

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